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Orthodox Herald

Celebrating our 42nd year

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THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

Another name for this month is Listopad or Falling Leaves. This is certainly more expressive than the Latin name — October. We can find some special days in October. One is the Holy Day of the Protection of the Mother of God on October 1/14 which is discussed elsewhere in this issue.

Coming close together are two saints which have been added to the calendar in the last few years. These are St. Innocent, the Metropolitan of Moscow on October 6/19 and St. Tikhon, Metropolitan of Moscow on October 9/21.

Commemorated on a variable Sunday, following the 20th Sunday after Pentecost, are the Holy Fathers of the 7th Ecumenical Council. This was the last Ecumenical Council. It was held in Nicea in 787. It affirmed the teaching about Holy Icons using the writings of John of Damascus. It was almost 75 years later that the icon controversy was finally settled leading to the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday of Great Lent. It is interesting that only the Fathers of the First and Last Ecumenical Council have a separate Sunday assigned to them; all the others are remembered together on one Sunday in July .

Celebrated in October, also on a day which varies, is St. Demetrius Saturday. This year it falls on October 23/Nov. 6. This is the last of six Saturdays which are known as Soul Saturdays. On these Saturdays following the Divine Liturgy the dead are prayed for by name. (These are taken from the diptichs or lists which were given to the priest in January prior to Meat-Fare Sunday.) The Liturgy is celebrated with a special prayer for "all who through the ages have departed in the true faith, and in the hope of resurrection and eternal life." Originally it was to commemorate those veterans who died on the battlefield.

Tact is the art of building a fire under people without making their blood boil.



THE PROTECTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

One of the favorite Holy Days in the Orthodox Churches, which come from the Slavic or Rus tradition, is the Protection of the Mother of God. This Holy Day is not celebrated in the churches which come from the Greek tradition, even though the event, which prompted it, occurred in Constantinople.

This day is to be found on the Church Calendar on October 1/14. It commemorates the appearance of the Mother of God in Constantinople in the 10th century. It is recorded in the life of St. Andrew, known as the Fool for Christ. St. Andrew and St. Epiphanius were in church for services when they saw the Mother of God approach the altar, supported by St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. She knelt and prayed with tears in her eyes. Then she took

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CZAR PAUL AND MALTA

What does the Order of Malta have to do with Russia and Orthodoxy? I found reference to it in my book **The Lives of the Saints** under October 12/25; but there was not enough information to satisfy the curiosity which had been stimulated by an article on commemorations for this day which my brother Al had translated several years ago.

The puzzle was finally complete when I visited Russia this past summer. I toured the Palace at Pavlovsk, which is located seventeen miles south of St. Petersburg and just beyond the town of Pushkin. Although I had been here previously, I had never been shown the chapel which has just been restored. The guide identified the chapel as the Maltese Chapel and it differed from any church or chapel I have ever seen. It combined Orthodox icons with copies of art by Western masters. The iconostas did not have the icons in the usual order and the walls of the chapel were decorated with the same Western art seen on part of the iconostas plus military standards which were captured from the French by Suvorov. How did this anomaly come to be?

It seems that as late as 1795, the Christian East jealously guarded parts of the Cross on which Jesus had been crucified. And although pieces could be found reposing in many cathedrals, monasteries, churches, palaces and even private homes, none were shared with the Orthodox Church in Russia.

in Italy was invaded by Napolean during the French Revolution. This invasion threatened the Order of Malta located here. This Order evolved from an earlier Order whose mission was to protect pilgrims from all over the world who journeyed to Jerusalem. It maintained hospices and hospitals and pursued other good works. When it was forced to leave Jerusalem, it was given a piece of the Life-giving Cross. It divided this into four parts taking one part with them to Malta where it settled. The Order had worked for many years in the East and was familiar with Russia and the Orthodox

Continued on page 33, Col. 2

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News CHRONOLOGY

OCTOBER 1993

BILL TYLAVSKY of SS Cyril and Methodius Parish of Jeanette, PA remembers the hunger pangs he felt during the depression. He grew thousands of pounds of produce in his garden last year and donated it to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. It was distributed through Green Harvest. He is 74 years old, has two artificial knees and a wife disabled by a stroke, but he puts in many hours from April until the first frost in his garden. He got advice on the project from a man in Connecticut who had started similar venture. His phone is (412) 327-3761.

IN CARPATHO-RUSSIA in the Diocese of Bishop Ephimi (Shutack) of Mukachevo and Uzhorod there are 450 parishes, 325 priests, 7 monasteries for women and 1 monastery for men. There are 280 nuns with the greatest number in the monastery in Mukachevo, which has 90 nuns. The nuns were resettled in this monastery after many of the other monasteries were destroyed in the Stalin era.

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH has removed the word **oversee** from a description of a bishop's role because it had connotations of slavery.

THE LAST SERVICE was held at Christ the Saviour Cathedral (OCA) in Miami, FL. A new church will be built at NW 166 St. and 77th Court. In the meantime services will be held at SS. Peter and Paul Church at 1411 SW 11th Street.

A 1994 Wall Calendar, 9x16 with 13 icons suitable for framing, listing the Holy Days according to the New Calendar, is available for $12 from St. George Cathedral, 7515 East 13th St., Wichita, KS 67206.

CHRISTIANS, especially the Coptic Orthodox (who are the original descendants of the Pharoahs and are the true, native Egyptians), are being horribly persecuted and forced out of Egypt by the Muslim fundamentalists and the government of Egypt.

RECOGNIZED AS A SAINT by the Serbian Orthodox Church is Fr. Justin Popovich, who was a voice of conscience as well as a respected theologian. He died in 1979. He is now known as St. Justin of Chiliye with his date of commemoration on March 25.

CLERGY SHIRTS, new or used, will be sent to priests and seminarians in Europe. Send to Orthodox Missions, P.O. Box 1213, Akron, OH 44309.

RASPUTIN was not a monk. He was a layman, a peasant from Siberia. He was a pilgrim to the Holy Land and enjoyed the hospitality of many monasteries on his wanderings, but as any one, except the inaccurate and sensational, will attest — **he was not a monk**. His real name was Novykh but was nicknamed Rasputin by the villagers of his native Pokrovskoye for being a "rasputnik" or debauchee.

OLD CALENDARS and Yearbooks from lodges like RBO, ROCMAS, UROBA and the Lemko Assoc. and from churches are needed by Rich Custer, 215 Melwood Ave., #37, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 to aid him in compiling a historical account of our people in the U.S.

OLD PHOTOS with accompanying explanations for inclusion into a commemorative photo book for the celebration of the Bicentennial of Orthodoxy in North America are being sought by Barbara Dubivsky, 575 Scarsdale Rd., Crestwood, NY 10707. All photos will be placed in the archives of the OCA unless a request is made for their return.

CHILDREN FROM RUSSIA are being adopted by American couples. Information may be obtained from Orthodox Christian Adoption Referral Service by calling them at (516) 922-0550 extension 26.

"WE AGAIN PRAY FOR THE BLESSED AND ALWAYS REMEMBERED FOUNDERS OF THIS HOLY CHURCH" this is an ektenia at every Divine Liturgy. To be a founder of a church is now a rare opportunity. It is being given by Holy Trinity Church, Calder Square, P.O. Box 10156, in State College, PA 16805. This Church will be home to people living in this vicinity who must now travel tens of miles over rugged mountains to attend an Orthodox Church and to service Penn State students.

THE ART OF THE ICON: a theology of beauty by Paul Evdokimov is that rare book on Orthodoxy that takes the sterile language of the cathechism on symbolism in the Orthodox Church and gives us a vision of beauty. For example it says in its section on the church building, "At the east end, we see a raised platform, the solea, whose central part is called the ambon from the Greek anabaino, meaning to 'mount up, go up.' It is the upper room, the place of eucharistic communion. The Church sings, 'Let us lift up our hearts and we will find ourselves in the Upper Room.' The **Sursum corda** invites us to lift up our whole being toward heaven." Send $20 to Oakwood Publications, 3827 Bluff St., Torrance, CA 90505-6359.

THE ORTHODOX YOUTH ASSOC. OF FINLAND recently observed its 50th year. Over 1000 people gathered in Joensuu to celebrate this event.

OBSERVING ITS 90th Anniversary ANNIVERSARY was St. Elias parish in Ingles and Lennard, Manitoba in Canada. The first church built in 1903 was a sod church which was used by Romanian and Lemko immigrants.

VOLUNTEERS are needed to work in the former USSR countries and Romania. You pay your own. No salary is paid while you help build up business skills, non-profit organization methods, educational institutions for a certain length of time. (800) 394-1945 or (202) 872-0933.

FREE SURPLUS FOOD COMMODITIES are being distributed to people in our area who make less than $871 a month for 1 person, $1179 for a 2 person family, $1486 for a 3 person family and $1794 for a 4 person family. Is your priest eligible?

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Fr. W.B. Stroyen, Ph.D., Editor

VISITING THE SICK

We often hear people say that they don't visit the sick and especially those who are dying because they don't know what to say or do. Perhaps, the suggestions in the following article will help:

Alleluia!

When my time is near to die and you should hear of it, come often and stay with me awhile to visit, for I'll be lonely and will need to be close to people. Look at me and talk about dying without "watching your words," for it will leave me free to tell you if I'm frightened. Tell me if you love me, for it will comfort and give me courage to go — and if we should cry together, I thank you now for sharing my grief in leaving the world, for I won't want to leave it. But when it's done, let your grief be finished — and give praise to Him who died that we might live, for in death I jump head-long and straight-way into eternity, right into the beginning of the rest of my life! Alleluia!

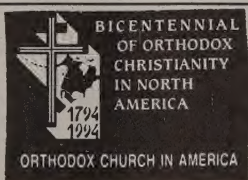
• Czar Paul

Church. It decided to turn to Emperor Paul I of Russia for protection. He agreed to be their Guardian. In 1799, the Order brought a piece of the Life-giving Cross to Emperor Paul I in Gatchina, which is located near Pavlovsk. At this time Paul was adding on to the Palace in Pavlovsk, which he much preferred to the one in Gatchina and he incorporated the Maltese Chapel into the Palace. He was murdered in 1801 but his widow, Maria Fedorovna, continued his work of expanding and beautifying this palace until 1828 when she died.

During the Second World War the palace was occupied by the Germans for two years. When they left, they torched the palace. It has taken twenty-five years to restore it and to collect many of the original paintings and furnishings, some of which had been taken to Siberia for safekeeping.

What happened to the piece of the Cross which had been taken to Russia by the Order of Malta? Very early on, it was taken to a Church in St. Petersburg. Prior to the Revolution it was taken to Gatchina on October 12 and kept in the palace chapel for six days after which it was returned to St. Petersburg.

So on the Calendar for October 12/25 we find this event: the bringing for the first time to Russia a piece of the Life-giving Cross. This was done by the Order of Malta. It brings another question to mind — How does the Orthodox Church look upon the wearing of the Maltese Cross?



The above is a copy of the commemorative stamp issued by the O.C.A.



Missed on it is the three bar cross on a cupola as shown above, which is the specific identifying symbol of our Orthodox church.

• The Protection

the veil she was wearing and extended it over her arms as a sign of protection.

There are many ikons depicting this event, but she is always depicted with the veil over her arms as a sign that she will always protect us. She will always help us. She is never alone but always with Christ. Today, with her veil (omophor) she stands in our Orthodox Church along with the hosts of saints and she is always ready to hear our prayers of need and to take them to the Throne of God. We pray: "Remember us in your prayers, O Lady, Virgin Theotokos, that we not perish for the increase of our sins; protect us from all evil and cruel misfortune. For we put our hope on you, and honoring the Feast of Your Protection, we magnify you."

INFORMATION FOR NEW ORTHODOX

Just a few hints on the manner of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion. It is more symbolic to receive with the arms crossed at the middle of the chest, right over left hand. Do not make the sign of the cross just before or after you approach the chalice. You may accidentally strike the chalice. Women should not wear lipstick. **Most new lipstick has a silicone base and it clings to the spoon.** Married women should have heads covered with a scarf or mantilla. Give your baptismal name loud enough for the priest to hear. He shouldn't have to ask you to repeat it. When you approach the chalice, make sure that you stand close enough for the priest to reach you with the spoon. Some people stand so far away it is almost impossible for the priest to reach them without spilling the Communion from the spoon. If there are not too many people to Communion, it is well if those receiving should return to stand near the stairs (ambo) until the priest gives the blessing and says the words: "Save, O God, Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance."

MISSION FUND

Helping with mission work to areas other than Alaska are Olga Bohleda, Pauline Danchak, Olga Washenko, Olga Peck, Ethel Watlock, and the Russian Orthodox Catholic Women's Mutual Aid Society.

Dabs of Thoughts

All too often, our Orthodox students trip blithely off to secular colleges or jobs — and return with their faith shattered. Why? Many of these teens don't really know what or why they believe.

The things you learn in maturity aren't simple things such as acquiring information and skills. You learn not to engage in self-destructive behavior. You learn not to burn up energy in anxiety. You discover how to manage your tensions. You learn that self-pity and resentment are among the most toxic of drugs. You find that the world loves talent but pays off on character. You come to understand that most people are neither for nor against you; they are thinking about themselves. You learn that no matter how hard you try to please, some people in this world are not going to love you — a lesson that is at first troubling and then really quite relaxing.

Thoughtful people are realizing that the most urgent need of our day is to return to the fundamentals of religion. Our spiritual bankruptcy in a time of world unrest and distress and the sense of inadequacy so many feel in handling personal problems is clear evidence of soul sickness.

The first leaves to turn color around the beginning of October are those from the sassafras tree. The leaves are most interesting as they differ on the same tree. They look like mittens with either two or three fingerlike lobes.

We have a book in our library called "The Candlelight Kingdom". It referred to the Orthodox Church. It was written about 20 years ago. Upon entering the average Orthodox Church today, we may well ask — Where are the candles?

We often see written the words: "of thrice-blessed memory." What do these words mean in this context?

Growing older is the only way to have a long life.

When the church stops seeking the lost, it is lost.

We can pray, believe and receive, or we can pray, doubt and do without.

HOW TOLERANT?

For most Americans — tolerance — is a good word. The notion that we live and let live as an ideal has been one of the strands binding us together, as a composite people drawn from so many different races, cultures, and origins. The opposite — intolerance — conjurs up scenes of racial, ethnic, and religious strife, which we know can tear a nation apart. We have only to watch TV news on present Yugoslavia to see this happening.

We all want to be tolerant people. Still, there is one level of some peoples' attitudes about tolerance which it is hard to agree with. It is the idea permeating Orthodoxy today that it doesn't really matter what you believe; it is not necessary to follow what the Church teaches or to advise others to do the same.

It is with great shock many find upon reading about the lives of many saints that they were intolerant. They believed that there is only one true God, and Jesus is His only begotten Son. Intolerance is what made Christianity grow into a world-wide Faith.

Most people get very uncomfortable when Orthodox Christian beliefs are discussed. They feel that they have no right to "cram our beliefs down other peoples' throats." We share in that disgust with spiritual arrogance, but something vital must not be overlooked. To be tolerant does not mean that we accept everything as being equally true, or that we have to fail to share with others what truth we believe we have received. To commend the truth as we see it, to allow another person to refuse to see it our way is tolerance in the best sense.

To fail to share our good news about the Orthodox faith because we are unwilling to confront other faiths has sapped the vitality out of our Orthodox Church. Does a false sense of "tolerance" keep you from offering the joy and truth of what you have learned about God, Christ and the Mother of God to others?

Treat every person with the respect due them as a precious creature of God, but do not be afraid to share with others the truths you know which have come in Jesus of Nazareth.

Tolerance in its best sense is not at all the same as "Indifference." And it is so easy to slip from one category to the other.

GIVING UP

How many times have you heard someone say: "I just gave up"? There is a widespread and understandable tendency today to say about a person or a situation: "I give up."

We are sometimes driven to say it about our own children. We say it about someone we have tried to help, only to have been met with rebuffs and resistance.

We say it about something we don't like in the Church, or about a community problem that seems to defy the best efforts of those concerned.

There is a striking contrast when we examine our attitude and that of Christ as we see Him in the New Testament. One writer has summed it up: "He understands us, sees everything that is in us — the worst as well as the best — and loves us anyway. This is the supreme wonder of Christ. He never gave up on anybody in His earthly life not even on Judas."

The reason that we are so often tempted to give up is that we feel our energies are wasted; that we are not getting anywhere. It is helpful at this point to remember how much it has meant in our personal lives to have had those who refused to give up on us: a parent, a teacher, a priest, a dear friend. Above all, we need to remember the God whose love would not let us go!

Miracles happen when there are those who will not give up. God works through these people; we can see it happen right around us if we look hard enough. We can be thankful that there are those in our lives and in the Church who are incapable of discouragement, who refuse to give in to a mood of despair and futility.

The one good way to "give up" in a situation is to give it up — to God. There are times when the solution comes only when we have done our best and then say: "Now, O Father, I cannot go farther alone — I put myself and my problems in Your Hands."

BAPTISM

Through the sacrament of Holy Baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost a child or an older person becomes a member of the Christian Family — the Body of Christ — a fellowship of people, guided, taught, and strengthened by the presence of God the Holy Spirit, in their relationships with each other.



EDITORS' NOTES

Last month, Patriarch Alexei was to have visited in the U.S. inaugurating the Bicentennial Year of Orthodoxy on this continent. It was disturbing to see his itinerary did not include either Minneapolis, Wilkes-Barre or South Canaan. All of these places are very important to the establishment of Orthodoxy in America. Father **Alexis Toth**, who is referred to as the **Father of Orthodoxy in America**, was active in these places. It is almost certain that Orthodoxy would have remained on the West coast of the U.S.A. if Fr. Alexis had not done mission work among the Galicians and Carpatho-Russians who had settled and were immigrating in great number from these areas of Eastern Europe. Sad!

We are putting our address list on computer. Please be patient with us during this transition time. Let us know if you fail to get your copy and please help us by adding the 4 numbers to your zip code — when you subscribe or resubscribe.

Matushka's trip on the Volga River with the BDDA left her with many fine memories and some disturbing ones. What was very upsetting was the number of children who had their hand out for "Give me a dollar." There were hordes of them too frequently egged on by an adult lurching on the sidelines. The situation was too reminiscent of the story **Oliver Twist** by Charles Dickens. What is going to happen to these children who two years ago asked for bubble gum and have in this short time "graduated" into asking for dollars and in some places were not above trying to stick their hands into a person's purse or waist bag or tear a pin off a passerby? Will knives be the next step?

Equally disturbing was the losing of self-esteem of the Russian people we talked with. Up to this time there was a certain sense of dignity of the ability to make it. This seems to be fleeing.

While I was in Russia the law was passed which tightened the rules governing religion. Many non-Orthodox people on our tour were very disturbed by the new law. They could not give any concrete reason except to state — church and state. Giving them examples of countries which have a similar church — state relationship like England, Wales, and Poland among others hopefully gave them another viewpoint. Arriving back in the U.S., I was shocked by the many columnists and editorials written on this subject. It seems that now that communism is gone something in Russia must be denigrated — Why not the Russian Orthodox Church?

As this law was being considered in the Russian Parliament — thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses from the U.S. and other countries were flooding Russia with missionaries. When one wave returned home, another took their place according to a member of that persuasion whom we talked with at Kennedy Airport. They covered even little hamlets. I spoke to many people who visited in Russia this summer. They went at different times and different places — all saw members of the Jehovah Witness missionizing.

What are we as Orthodox doing for our spiritual relatives? We helped with packages one winter. Is this the extent of our help? Where is the clearinghouse for religious help? Help not only to churches in Moscow but to those in areas a distance away and in countries (Ukraine) once a part of the USSR. Help is needed: material help and religious help to several generations brought up to believe that "God does not exist" and "religion is the opiate of the people." When do we start? and Where do we start?

Matushka Nina Stroyen

PRESS FUND

With so much changing in the world, the church and parishes it is good to know that the Russian Orthodox Catholic Women's Mutual Aid Society, 975 Greentree Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15220 is still adhering to one of its original purposes of helping Orthodox institution. One of these is "The Orthodox Herald." We hope women of all ages would consider insurance coverage in this organization and so help to it continue its good work.

Also helping us to continue publishing are: Ethel Watlock, Olga Washenko, Irene Allen, Helen Dopsovic, Anonymous. Mary and Simon Herbert in memory of Sonia Glovach. Ted Cramer in memory of his nephew Richard Cramer. Father and Matushka Stroyen in memory of his sister Anna Komyati and her father John Bohush.

SAINTS' CALENDAR

A mother in Texas was recently arrested for hiring someone to kill a cheerleader who was on the same team as her daughter. The mother worried that this young lady would be picked to be the head cheerleader instead of her daughter. Quite often we read of stage mothers who push their children to become popular. We all know of mothers who drive their children from lesson to lesson so that they would be popular and achieve something they might not have done in their own lives.

This seems to have been ever so. In the 4th century in Egypt there was a mother who had a very beautiful daughter. The mother was ambitious for her daughter and she pushed her every way possible so that she would become popular. In doing this, she instilled her daughter with a wrong set of values — that popularity and fame were to be sought no matter the price. The daughter, Taisia (Thais), followed the advice and guidance of her mother and eventually she became a high priced call girl in Alexandria.

She eventually realized that there was more to life than the luxury she lived in and she became interested in God. She heard of a staretz, an elder, St. Pafnythe, and she sought him out and asked him to teach her about God. He turned her from her sinful life toward the path of salvation. During her instruction period, the staretz did not gloss over her sins. He did not let her excuse herself or blame her mother. He informed her that her sins were very "Heavy" and that she would have to give a reply to God for all of them as well as for all the people she had led astray. She bore the responsibility.

Taisia was so deeply moved by the guidance she received that she gathered the vast amount of valuables she had amassed in her sinful life, went to the city square and burned them.

She proclaimed her shame at the style of life she had lived and kept repeating the penace verse she had been given: "Thou who hast made me and redeemed me by Thy Passion, have mercy on me."

Taisia entered a monastery where she chose to live in seclusion for three years until her death. Before she died she said: "From the moment I entered my cell (room) all of my sins were ever before my eyes. I cried bitterly over them."

St. Taisia, the penitent, is commemorated on October 8/21.



On a recent trip to Russia I sailed up the Volga River between Moscow and St. Petersburg. The boat made many Green Stops when we had time to wander around in the villages, swim in the River and pick berries and mushrooms. These stops also enabled the cooks on board to buy supplies along the way and they served us plain homestyle meals instead of the restaurant meals usually served at hotels. One of the dishes served was immediately labeled "Liver Stroganoff" by the Americans aboard. It was unusual.

Liver Stroganoff m/v
Alexandr Radishchev

2 Tbls. shortening
1 lb. liver
1 Tbls. flour
1 cup water
1 onion, large
salt & pepper
dash Worcestershire sauce

Wash liver, remove skin and ducts. Cut into strips. Season with salt and pepper. Coat with flour and fry in shortening until almost done. Remove liver and place into heavy saucepan. Saute onions until golden. Add to liver. Add water (and beef bouillon club, if desired) to frying pan. Simmer, mixing constantly. Add to saucepan. Add sour cream and Worcestershire sauce. Mix well. Simmer at least 10 min. until done. Taste, adjusting seasoning. Serve over rice.

Variation: Omit flour. Increase water to 1½ cups and add with 1 envelope of brown gravy mix. Also omit Worcestershire sauce.

Because this relationship is so important, the Orthodox Church teaches that Baptism should be administered in presence of the Christian Family. (For good reasons, however, private Baptism can always be arranged.)

We the Family are receiving a new member into our parish community, and while there is no blood relationship, there is a very vital spiritual relationship as we are joined by a new brother or sister.

A parish is a spiritual Christian Family — a community of believers bonded by a common faith in Christ.



OCTOBER 1993

1 Heb 9:1-7
2 1 Cor 14:20-25
3 **2 Cor 6:16-7:1 - Sunday**
4 Eph 4:25-32
5 5:20-26
6 5:25-33
7 5:33-6:9
8 6:18-24
9 1 Cor 15:39-45
10 **2 Cor 9:6-11 - Sunday**
11 Phil 1:1-7
12 1:8-14
13 1:12-20
14 1:20-27
15 1:27-2:4
16 1 Cor 15:58-16:3
17 **2 Cor 11:31-12:9 - Sunday**
18 Phil 2:12-16
19 2:17-23
20 2:24-30
21 3:1-8
22 3:8-19
23 2 Cor 1:8-11
24 **Gal 1:11-19 - Sunday**
25 Phil 4:10-23
26 2 Tim 2:1-10
27 Col 1:18-23
28 1:24-29
29 2:1-7
30 2 Cor 3:12-18
31 **Gal 2:16-20 - Sunday**

BIBLE STUDY

Has your life slipped into a rut? Several different definitions have been given for a rut. One is "A rut is a grave with the ends kicked out"; another is, "A rut is a junior size grave."

We may ask ourselves the same questions St. Paul did. Why am I alive, what is my goal, where am I headed?

The Bible tells us how St. Paul answered these questions. He was born into a position, both socially and politically, that was as enviable as anything that day had to offer. He was born a Roman citizen in a time when the Roman empire encompassed 80 percent of the known world. His family could afford to have him taught by the best teachers of the day. He was born into a family that was among the influential group in the Jewish "church" which controlled the Jewish people under the authority of the Roman supervisor of the area. When he was still a young man he was influential in his own right in the affairs of this powerful body.

He was learned, rich, and influential and yet there was no motivating force in his life beyond the desire to persecute Christians.

Then on the road to Damascus — he met Christ.

The effect of this meeting was so great that Paul amazed all of the people who knew him. His persecution of Christians ceased and he made a complete turnabout — he began to preach Christ.

He wrote: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil 1:21. He felt that even dying would be of benefit to him as he would go to be with Christ. In Christ he now lived and moved and had his being — his purpose.

He further stated that: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:14), His God-given goal was to be a "servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God." (Roman 1:1). We like St. Paul must know Christ in order for Him to give this call.

Christ can do for each of us that which He did for St. Paul, give us a meaning, an objective, and a joy in life. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." (John 1:12)

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